

Middletown Commission on the Arts

Minutes, January 22, 2014

Present

Cassandra Day (chair)
Jenny Hawkins Lecce (vice chair)
(Arr 7:11) (Left 8:53)
Franca Biales (sec.)
Richard Kamins
Barbara Arafah
Lee Godburn (left 8:46)
Robert Santangelo
Sebastian Giuliano

Also Present

Stephan Allison, staff
Nancy Kelly-Director,
Middletown Chorale

Absent

Fran Ganguli
Charlotte McCoid
Joyce Kirkpatrick

Call to order

Commission Chair Cassandra Day called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. in Municipal Building, Room 208

Public session: Nancy Kelly, Director of The Middletown Chorale introduced herself and explained that she was at the MCA meeting as an observer.

Minutes from December 18, 2013

Motion to approve by Hawkins Lecce, seconded by Kamins. Discussion: no discussion. Motion carried with one abstention, Robert Santangelo.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the meeting agenda as written by Hawkins Lecce, seconded by Santangelo. Carried unanimously.

Remarks from the Chair

Chair Cassandra Day wished everyone happy new year and reminded all that there are still 2 vacancies on the MCA that need to be filled.

2013 Old Business:

a) Budget Report

Allison electronically distributed the current spreadsheets for review prior to the meeting. No discussion.

b) Program Update

- i. **Arts Stakeholders Group** – Met and discussed goal setting. A sub committee was formed to further discuss the direction for art space. Currently there are 7 members on this committee. Next meeting will be on February 19, 2014.
- ii. **Visual Arts Competition-** many ideas were discussed such as closing down a portion of Main St. once a month and having events. Bussing people from the outskirts of town close to the Cromwell line to downtown with the purpose of encouraging them to participate in downtown venues. Bringing events to the Westfield portion of town. Creating a venue that is a multipurpose venue for the community. Perhaps use a model

similar to the casino busses where the participants would be given Downtown Bucks to spend downtown. Many ideas were discussed.

c) **Grant Review Process-**

- i. **Standardized interview questions-** We should all be asking the same type of questions of each applicant. We should have a list of standard questions that would serve as a guideline. Kamins read questions that had been submitted by Kirkpatrick. Chair Day would like the commissioners to send her a list of suggested questions by January 30, at 4:00 pm.
- ii. **Setting policy/standards for sustaining established arts organizations-** There was discussion about the need to sustain local, community based arts organizations especially in these economic times and the need for a policy. Discussion also revolved around the responsibility of MCA as well as other community groups to help sustain these arts organizations. Godburn suggested that Chair Day request ideas on how to deal with sustainability from the commissioners. Chair will send an email with the request.

Committee Reports:

a) **Public Art Task Force**

- i. Hawkins Lecce spoke about having a policy in writing that addresses how the City acquires and divests itself of art. She had previously electronically sent the commissioners examples of how other cities deal with this. There was discussion.

b) **Executive Committee**

- i. **Arts Advocacy nominations-** Chair Day has received several nominations and will be putting them into a document along with a small summary of each for the commissioners to read before the next MCA meeting. There was discussion about not being committed to having the award go to one group and one individual. Any combination could be done.
- ii. **Other-** Chair Day dissolved the Public Art Task Force and recreated a Public Art Committee to which she appointed Kirkpatrick, Hawkins Lecce and McCoid with Kirkpatrick as the chair. She tasked the committee with the creation of a policy on public art acquisition and that they meet before the next MCA meeting on February 26.

c) **Nominating Committee**

- i. **Review of Bylaws** – Hawkins Lecce spoke about a discrepancy in the digital copy versus the hard copy of a bylaw on Commission Protocol revised in 2003. Discussion ensued as to whether this is a bylaw or procedural memo. Chair Day asked Allison to look into it and report back.
- ii. **Nomination suggestions-** The need to fill vacancies on the MCA was once again discussed. There are two vacancies. There was discussion about Article 8 of the bylaws- attendance.

New Business:

- a) **Review Mission Statement-** Mission statement was read
- b) **Set 2014-15 goals-** Chair Day will make a task list requesting goals from commissioners prior to February 4.

- c) **2014-2015 budget submission approval-** Allison will be asking for an increase for grants (\$7,000) and for Kids Art (\$10,000). Arts organizations are struggling and need the support. Kirkpatrick through email suggested that public art's purchase be restored to \$1,000 and an additional \$150 for MCAAA costs of framing and plaque.
- d) **Grants panel selection for Category 2,3 applications.** Commissioners Godburn, Kamins, and Biales volunteered to serve with Chair Day as the alternate. Date TBD.
Category 1 grants will be decided upon by the whole commission. The commission will meet prior to the MCA's February 26th meeting.
- e) **Other-** none

Miscellaneous:

- a) **Grant Reports-** none
- b) **Announcements-** Allison was contacted by American Wind Symphony Orchestra. It travels on a barge on the river. They are looking to come to Middletown in August.
Arafeh announced The Emperor of Atlantis will be presented by GMCA at 3:00 PM at the MHS Performing Center.
- c) **Other-** none

Adjournment:

Chair Day entertained a motion from Kamins to adjourn at 9:01 p.m., seconded by Santangelo. The MCA will next meet for its regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 26, 2014, room B19 Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Franca Biales